1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

Nje[1] horsemen, and owing to this circumstance they derived their nickname of *Bin shio* or relatives of flying ants. It will be observed that the clan titles are nowadays believed to have been derived from the names borne by the reputed founders of the clan, but there is evidence that some at least of the clan titles were formerly place names.

Clan Emblems and Taboos.—Some of the Katab clans have, as we shall see, certain animal or plant taboos, but these do not appear to be closely associated with the system of clan exogamy or to play a prominent part in maintaining the sense of relationship between the members of the clan. We have seen that the Aku bear the nickname of "flying ants" and, although the flying ant is not an Aku emblem, we are reminded of Andrew Lang's view that totems were originally sobriquets. It does not appear that the Aku have any general taboo other than the male shea tree (*nensham*). This tree may be cut down, but its wood may not be used for burning. If an Aku were to eat food cooked over a fire in which *nensham* wood had been used his body would become covered with sores. The leaves of this tree are used as a taboo, and no Aku woman would dare enter a house if the owner had placed a bunch of *nensham* leaves at the door.

The Agbat clan respects the crocodile (*tsang*). It is their friend and brother (*nanyuk*) and on it oaths are sworn. An Agbat, it is said, can play unharmed with a crocodile in the water. If he sees its dead body he hastily retreats, or buries it. He will not even touch a piece of crocodile skin. If he kills a crocodile by accident he must hurry off to the forest for some special medicine; if he kills it by design the entire clan will, it is believed, perish. The reason assigned for this association is that once in ancient times the Katab were flying from their enemies and came to an unfordable river. Crocodiles formed a bridge for the Agbat, but swam away when the other Katab clans tried to cross by the same means. An Agbat can frighten a crocodile by merely calling out the name of some other clan

[1] A variant account says that Agbat and his people were out hunting and came across the men of Shokwa who were performing certain religious rites. As Agbat passed them his horse's hoof made a hole in the ground, and out of this hole sprang Aku. Aku joined in the religious dance of the Shokwa, and was immediately acclaimed as a brother. There is a curious parallel to this story given in Hutton's *The Sema Nagas*, p. 124. Mr. Hutton says: "The Asimi abstain from eating winged ants. The reason given is that their first ancestors emerged from the earth."

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

614 784 825 make is by the *tatong*. The respect shown by the Shokwa is shared by all the Katab clans, and any member of another clan living near Shokwa who accidentally killed a *tatong* would take its body to Shokwa for burial. The Shokwa people do not, however, call themselves by the name of their emblem animal. On the contrary, the *tatong's* name is taboo.

614 784 824 The Aswen subdivision of Minyam respects a certain large tree at Kibori. This tree is known as " the husband of Aswen ", and rites are regularly performed at its base. There was formerly another tree of the same species at Kibori, which was the original object of worship and was known as " the mother of Aswen ". It was destroyed by fire some forty years ago, and it is said [766] that as it fell it gave a mighty shout. The whole of the Aswen sub-clan assembled, and a funeral feast was held with beer-drinking, dancing, and music (horn band), and the death of the tree was lamented as that of some great chief. The grove round the remaining tree is taboo. No one may enter it with an axe, and every November at harvest first-fruit rites are performed at the base of the tree. The space round the tree is cleared. [782] The headman of Aswen leads the procession of grown-up men, and when they come to the tree all kneel down and salute it twice by touching the ground and then the forehead. The head of the sub-clan offers a petition to the tree for the welfare of the clan and then smears the trunk with a porridge made from new millet (*digitaria*) and pours libations of beer. These rites are performed in the evening, and a dance and feast follow and are kept up until the following night. No female or young person is allowed to approach the vicinity of the tree. The sub-clan does not respect all trees of the same species, and we cannot, therefore, regard the particular tree as a totem, though the title " Mother of Aswen " would suggest that the sub-clan regard the tree as its ancestor. Possibly we have here an instance of a totem in the making, so that in time all trees of the species will become sacred to the Aswen.

Sub-clans and Kindreds.—The principal clans, viz. Minyam 613 and Agbat, have subdivisions which may be described as sub-clans, 583 the characteristic feature of the sub-clan being that it constitutes a wife-stealing unit *vis-à-vis* any other sub-clan of the same clan. The sub-clan appears to have come into existence by a [616] process of fission which in the first instance resulted in a dual

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

844 base. The cord was in former times planted with a seed yam
[824] and the spot marked. When the yam grew up it was pounded and given to the child to eat, in the belief that it would add to his strength. The stump of the cord is licked constantly for a few days by the midwife, who uses mouthfuls of hot water. No beliefs are attached to the placenta, which is buried at the
845 back of the house. Twins are not considered unlucky. Nor are
847 albinoes. But idiotic or deformed children were taken to the bush and abandoned. The mother's abdomen is swathed in
853 string bandages, which she continues to wear throughout the weaning period, the intention being to preserve the figure. She
[171] also keeps her body regularly smeared with red earth, as this is believed to be good for her milk. This custom is widespread in Nigeria, being found, e.g. among the Kare-kare of Bornu. The original object of the practice was probably to ward off evil influences, but it serves as a public announcement that she is weaning a child, an announcement which is advisable, as a
[833] woman may not have sexual relations during the lactation period, which among the Katab is reckoned as three years, a rule which must act as a check on sub-marriages.

553 A name for the child may be chosen by the father, mother, or relative. There is no fixed rule. A friend, or even a stranger staying in the house at the time of the birth, may ask that his name may be given to the child. Parents commonly confer the names of dead relatives, such as a grandfather or grandmother's or father's brother. Or the name given may have reference to some accidental circumstance at the time of birth. Thus a man called his daughter "Matan Malam", i.e. wife of a "malam"[1] because a "malam" was staying in his house on the day she was born. He called another daughter "Ladi" because she was born on Sunday.[2] One mother called her third daughter Kadayinkina, "You know I was right", as a reproof to a rival wife. Some common names are Ayashim (Friend of man), Tado (The Strong), Kaza (God), Duniya (Experience of the World). The name is assigned two days after birth without any ceremony. But if the mother had been unfortunate and lost a number of children previously, a ceremony accompanied by beer and prayers for the child's welfare would be held, the priest (Magaji Elenowum) being summoned for the occasion.

[1] A "malam" is a Muslim teacher.

[2] Lahadi or Ladi = Sunday.